Notes
CSB

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION OF PRIESTS OF SAINT BASIL — COLLECTED BY ROBERT JOSEPH SCOLLARD, CSB

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ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
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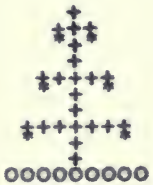

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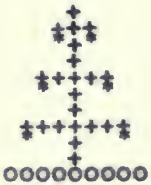

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

This volume had its origin in anecdotes about Basilian preaching collected in connection with a course in predication that I gave at St. Basil's Seminary, Toronto, to second year theology classes between 1952 and 1955. To these tales which recount the successes and the failures of Basilian preachers have been added little stories selected from material gathered for biographies of deceased confreres and from other sources for the history of the Congregation and its houses. Brought together they reveal the wit of confreres, give insights into the routine life of houses and at times show the direction towards which the development of the Congregation was tending. Some stories will be understood and appreciated only by those who knew the characters in each anecdote; others recount situations that recurr in every generation.

One day during recreation Father David Bauer told his fellow novice and former teammater, Edward McLean:

"I don't know for sure that I have a vocation to the Basilians, but I am certain that I do not have a vocation to the Novitiate."

Begun in V. II

When Father Louis Bondy was stricken with phlebitis, Father Elliott Allen who had suffered a heart attack some months before visited him in the hospital and consoled him thusly:

"Phlebitis. It is the same as a coronary thrombosis but attacks only those who have no heart."

After the death of Father Terence McLaughlin, Father Brown told of an experience he had when Father McLaughlin was superior of St. Michael's College. There was a football game being played in Rochester that a number of Basilians on the college staff wanted to see. One by one they went into the superior's office and were turned down. Among those who wanted to go were Father Joseph Timmons who was in charge of the college yearbook and who gave as his reason for going that he wanted to consult the editor of the Aquinas yearbook. He told Father Brown, "You may as well go in and be refused like the rest of us."

Father Brown did go in. Father McLaughlin put his head down, a characteristic gesture, then asked:

"Have you any reason for going?"

"No reason. I just want to see the game."

"Then go. You are the first one to tell me the truth. Be back early Sunday night."

When Father Brown was stationed at St. Michael's College School, his parents would call him from Buffalo once or twice a month. When he answered the phone he would say:

"Father Brown speaking."

If his father had placed the call, the reply would be:

"Father Brown here too."

After the Basilian Newsletter began including lists of books recommended for local houses, Father Burke during a visit to Toronto asked Father Scollard who prepared the lists:

"Please stop sending lists of books to Father Edwin Kline. As soon as he sees a list, he wants to order the books for our library. Next month we have to build more shelves to hold them."

A student of St. Thomas More College one day asked Father Carr a question in class. His answer came quickly:

"That's on next year's course. You'll have to pay your fees again to get the answer."

In Vancouver Father Carr became a close friend of Archbishop Duke. The Archbishop usually granted him anything he asked for, so one day the priests at St. Mark's College urged him to ask for something they felt the Archbishop would not grant to them. They hoped that if Father Carr asked, the Archbishop would grant it. To their urging, Father Carr replied:

"I don't mind asking him for it, but I don't want him to get the idea he can refuse me."

Father Elliott Allen was appointed to the staff of St. Mark's College, Vancouver, in the annual appointments for 1955/1956. Father Henry Carr came east that summer and meeting him at St. Michael's College greeted him with these words:

"When are you coming West? When you get to Vancouver, forget that you have ever been at St. Michael's College."

About 1910, when he was still a young priest Father Henry Carr was appointed to preach in St. Basil's Church on Good Friday afternoon, a service that regularly filled the church to capacity. He did so. Afterwards the priests gathered in the community room but contrary to custom no reference was made to the sermon. Finally Father Carr asked Father Francis Powell what he thought of it. Father Powell answered:

"Harry, I am glad that you brought that up. I was not going to say a word, but since you want to know, That was neither the time nor the place to perpetrate a joke."

Father Carr had preached a full 45 minutes.

Father Wilfrid Dwyer visited Father Henry Carr at St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, one summer. The other priests on the staff were absent and for two weeks they discussed philosophical problems. Finally it came Father Carr's turn to leave on holidays. As he was leaving he called out to Father Dwyer:

"You might as well ride to the station with me."

On the way to the train, Father Dwyer observed:

"We have been talking for two weeks and you have plied me with questions, but you have never told me where you stand on these questions."

"Too late now", was all the satisfaction that Father Carr gave him in reply,

Father Carr was once appointed to preach in St. Basil's Church, Toronto, on the proofs for the existence of God. He decided to follow St. Thomas Quinas very closely and presented first the objections after the manner of the Angelic Doctor. When he had finished this part of the sermon he looked at his watch, saw that he had used up the time allotted for the sermon, then without another word he came down from the pulpit leaving the sermon unfinished and hanging in mid-air.

Father Carter's parents attended the same elementary school in Berkeley as Father Michael Pickett. Mr. Carter and Father Pickett shared one of the old fashioned double desks. Therefore when his son was ordained, Mr. Carter wanted Father Pickett to preach at the First Mass. The sermon began with Father Pickett pointing directly at Mr. and Mrs. Carter:

"Mike Carter and Lizzie O'Neill. God, I knew you when you were this high. God bless you. If anyone deserves a priest in their family, it is you."

Father Collanges was a very methodical man and quite serious about all things. He was fond of playing at bowls after dinner, but it annoyed him if any of the players paid attention to anything besides the game. In a moment of such annoyance he uttered a saying that became traditional in the Annonay community:

"Gentlemen, when you play, you must not amuse yourselves."

Once when he was stationed at St. Mary's Parish in Owen Sound, Father Charles Collins was put in charge of St. Michael's Mission Church in the Irish Block. He made several attempts to get the people to increase their Sunday offerings, but without any appreciable results. One day he decided to preach on faith, hope and charity. His sermon began:

"Faith, hope and charity are three great virtues and two of them are practiced in a wonderful way by the people of the Irish Block. Faith, that somebody will give the priest something. Hope, that he will be able to live on it."

One Sunday Father Collins was preaching during the Christmas season. Looking at the Christmas crib, he painted a word picture of the stable at Behtlehem:

"There are the oxen. There are the sheep. There is a donkey, but no pigs. Where were the pigs? Out at the night clubs."

During a community discussion about mental prayer, Father Cushing once questioned the prevailing practice of the superior reading the points of meditation: the first point, then a pause of some minutes, a second point also followed by a pause for reflection, and lastly a third point. He gave as his reason:

"It disturbs those who are meditating and wakes up those who are sleeping to no purpose."

Father Daniel Cushing once went to visit Father Thomas Heydon when Father Heydon was looking after St. Martin of Tours Parish in Drayton. While there he fell ill with pneumonia. Father Cushing never enjoyed robust health and those looking after him thought that he was dying. A confrere came from Toronto to visit him and he discussed with Father Heydon whether the funeral should be in Toronto where Father Cushing was now stationed, or in Windsor where he had spent many years at Assumption College. All this time Father Cushing could hear but could not speak. Finally he summoned up enough strength to whisper audibly:

"When my time comes, bury me in Toronto."

To the discomfiture of Father Heydon and his visitor.

Father Diemer preached the retreat for priests at St. Michael's College in 1965. During it he gave the following definitions of psychotic and neurotic:

"The psychotic believes that two and tow make five.

"The neurotic believes that two and two make four and he worries about it."

Father Dolan was the master of the pithy phrase. After listening to a sermon preached in St. Basil's Church, Toronto, with much eloquence by a confrere, he remarked:

"He had nothing to say and he said it well."

Father Donnelly was fond of quoting poetry in his sermons. One of his favorite quotations was:

"When I am dead, When I am dead,
The stars will still shine overhead."

When Father Heydon was in his early sixties and Father Charles Donovan was a newly ordained priest, they got into a discussion about the age of Basilians at death. Father Donovan needled Father Heydon:

"The good die young."

"You are going to live to a ripe old age", rejoined Father Heydon.

During the debate about the revised vow of poverty in the year 1922-1923, it was reported that Bishop Michael Fallon was of the opinion that Basilians would never be able to keep it. Some young priests were discussing this one day and one asked Father Donovan what he was going to do.

"Oh! I signed up for it."

"Do you think Basilians can keep it?"

"Don't worry about that", was his answer.

Fathers Wilfrid Dore and Russell Pendergast were sent to Edmonton in August 1963 to take over St. Joseph's College from the Christian Brothers. They went by train. As the train approached Edmonton, Father Dore asked:

"How much money have you, Russ?"

Father Pendergast had about $35.00. Father Dore then took stock of his own finances. He had $60.00. Adding the two he observed:

"It is not enough Russ. We have got to stay."

After Father Robert Crooker was appointed Secretary (Registrar) of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, he continued to spend more time at St. Basil's Seminary that his courses in Canon Iaw strictly required. To some scholastics he seemed to be there all the time. One day John Dougheny remarked:

"There is something spooky about him. I see him coming out of rooms, but I never see him going into them."

When Father Robert Miller, a priest of the Archdiocese of Toronto, was growing up in St. Basil's Parish, Father DuMouchel would sometimes say to him:

"Robert! The Roberts were never famous for their sanctity."

After he was appointed to the University of St. Thomas, Father Wilfrid Dwyer used a favorite expression of his only once in class because the expression:

"Order, Gentlemen."

brought forth the response:

"Four beers."

Fathers Welty and Wilfrid Dwyer were close friends. When Father Dwyer was elected delegate to the General Chapter of 1960 by St. John Fisher College, he visited Father Welty in the Infirmary at St. Michael's College. He was rather proud of the trust shown him by his confreres in Rochester and let Father Welty know this. Whereupon Father Welty observed:

"They must have been hard up."

Father Francis Firth was short of stature, not gifted with a physique in keeping with his extraordinary mental powers, but he was not without a sense of humor. For some years he wore a decrepit hat that many confreres thought should be replaced. In answer to persistent queries as to why he was wearing it, he wryily remarked:

"It keeps away the girls."

After the opening of the new St. Basil's Seminary in September 1951, Sunday work was apportioned among the staff. Father Firth was appointed to Beaverton. A confrere congratulated him and to these congratulations he replied:

"I did not see what was so wonderful about going to Beaverton until I saw what were the alternatives."

These were the Mercer Reformatory for Female Prisoners and the Ontario Hospital for the Insane in Toronto.

One day at the curial house, Father Hubert Coughlin was complaining about Stanley Kutz and his propaganda in favor of a review of the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church opposing birth control. Father Coughlin noted:

"He is in favor of birth control in every conceivable way."

"In every inconceivable way", corrected Father Fischette.

When Father Flahiff was elected Superior General in 1954, his sister with the Sisters of Charity, sent him a telegram:

"Alas my poor brother".

It was followed by a letter with a clipping containing an advertisement for a beef soup in which a large bull looks at a cube of the manufacturer's concentrate and laments:

"Alas! My poor brother."

One day at Catholic Central High School in Detroit, Father James Embser began to extoll, in his ebbulient manner, the virtues of Father French. One after another he ran off a litany of virtues. When he had said what he wanted to say, the confreres standing around were wondering what Father French would say to this fulsome eulogy. They had not long to wait:

"You forgot chastity."

When Father John Glavin went to Assumption High School as a boarder, it was the first night he had spent away from home and he was terribly homesick. Two or three days later he wrote his mother about coming home.

As it happened the letter arrived during the course of visit from her brother who worked in the Patent Office in Ottawa. She showed him the letter and asked his advice. He calmed her distress by saying this was not unsual:

"Advise him to stick it out until Christmas and promise that when he comes home on holidays you will talk it over."

He followed up this counsel with another one:

"You should send John on for law. I don't think he missed a single point in making his case for coming home at once."

As it turned out, two weeks later the "potential lawyer" was quite happy at boarding school.

Father Gregoire was appointed first rector of the Basilian House of Studies opened in Windsor, July 1965. In October of the same year he was visiting at St. Michael's College School in Toronto and one priest asked him what he thought of some of the liberal views on the religious life held by some confreres in Windsor, among them scholastics. He replied:

"I have made up my mind on only one thing. If a scholastic will not obey, out he goes."

Father Allen Geneca was an inquisitive scholastic who did not hesitate to ask on occasions personal questions. One day at Assumption College he asked Father Hartmann:

"Why is your face always so red?"

In a split second came the answer:

"Kneeling too close to the vigil lights."

Father Hartmann had served for a number of years with the Royal Canadian Air Force as a chaplain overseas. When he died in Windsor some veterans suggested that a military touch would be appropriate at his funeral. They arranged for a soldier to play the bagpipes as the coffin was being carried from the church to the hearse. Afterwards, Father Thomas McGouey who knew that Father Hartmann's family had been hotel keepers suggested:

"Ed would have liked that touch of Scotch at his funeral."

During his last years, at St. Michael's College, Father Heydon listened one Sunday to the priests discussing their Sunday work. He had been in good health and that morning had been asked to say Mass at a convent where the sisters urged him to say a few words. Immensely proud of having being able to preach, Father Heydon proclaimed:

"I preached myself this morning."

"I also preached this morning, but I preached Christ Crucified", put in one of his listeners.

Father Hurley served as Superior at the Seminary in Laporte, Texas, for a short time. Later in his life when he was with confreres who were talking about a new superior he would remark:

"I once had a bit of authority myself."

When Father Iversen was treasurer of the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, he bought a beagle which he called Punch. He was frequently seen walking with his dog and this prompted a pun from Father McNeil:

"There goes Punch's Pilot (Pontius Pilate)".

One day when he was President of the University of St. Michael's College, Father Kelly was reminiscing about his first coming to the institution. He came with his brother Joe. When they left home, his mother gave all their money to Joe and strictly enjoined him nto to give any to John. They took the Bay street car up from the union station and after one glance at St. Michael's John asked Joe for the fare home. Nothing doing. A week later he made another appeal and met with refusal.

"At Christmas time we both went home for the holidays. Joe stayed home and never came near the College again. And here I am still around."

After a year on graduate studies, Father James Keon was appointed to the University of Windsor. Father McCorkell, religious superior of the Basilians teaching at the University, gave Father Keon his timetable from the Head of the Philosophy Department. It was exactly what Father Keon had hoped for and he expressed his delight. This drew from Father McCorkell:

"I am not so much concerned with how pleased you are with the courses you have been given to teach as I am with how pleased the students will be with your teaching."

Father John Murphy preached the sermon at the funeral of Father Thomas McGouey and in doing so delivered a fulsome eulogy of the deceased. At the end of the sermon Father Killoran whispered to Father Robert Scollard who was sitting beside him:

"Is there a rebuttal?"

Father Killoran was equally well known for his memory and for his wit. One day a lady phoned him at St. Anne's in Detroit:

"Father would you visit my husband in the hospital? We have not lived in St. Anne's for nineteen years, but I know he would to see you. I am Mrs. Miller. You would not remember me."

"Remember you! Why are you not Mrs. Miller who lived at 97 - 25th Avenue?"

"Oh! Father you did remember us after all these years."

After some further small talk, Mrs. Miller asked if the rioting had reached St. Anne's. Father Killoran assured her that it had not, but it had come close. Then he asked:

"Does you husband still have all those guns?"

This astounded Mrs. Miller and she went on to marvel at his memory.

"I have not seen you for years, but I have gone to confession to you many times."

Father Killoran could not resist:

"And I remember all your sins."

" I wouldn't doubt it", said Mrs. Miller getting in the last word.

Father Lacey was inclined to be secretive about his movements, especially when he went away on a 72 hour permission. This made confreres more curious about where he went. During one such absence from St. Anne's Church, Houston, Father John Glavin bet Father Lee Higgins 25 cents that he could not find out where Father Lacey had been. On Father Lacey's return, Father Higgins asked:

"Man to man, with no evasion, where were you?"

"Out in the sun", came the truthful answer.

During his first year at St. John Chrysostom Church in San Juan de Aragon, Father Launtrie was called upon by the Sisters to deal with an obstreporous drunk. The man was using foul language in both English and Spanish. What he saind in English made Father Launtrie blush; the sisters not knowing English were blushing at what he was saying in Spanish. Next day the Sisters asked Father Max Murphy how Father Launtrie felt after his experience.

"Tired", was the reply. Then came an explanation:

"He spent the night looking up words in his Spanish dictionary."

Father Wilfrid Dwyer during his student days at Assumption College was once called to Father Forster's office to meet his pastor, Monignor Stanley who was visiting the College in the company of Monsignor Aylward, pastor of Sarnia. Msgr. Aylward inquired of Father Forster:

"How is my boy, LeBel, doing?"

"Best all-round boy since the days of Parnell Mahoney", came the answer.

Monsignor Mahoney was then rector of St. Peter's Seminary and Vicar General of the Diocese of London.

One day Father Levack was reminiscing with some confreres about life in the Seminary:

"Father Lajeunesse would look at me as if I had done something not in keeping with the Rule, and I would look right back at him as if I had not."

One day Father Levack was playing golf in sports clothes and on the links he met up with a stranger who in the course of their conversation asked:

"Do you have any family?"

"None to speak of", was Father Levack's reply.

After his profession in 1952, Father Lynch was appointed to St. Basil's Seminary to complete his Arts course at St. Michael's College. Towards the end of that school year he confided to another scholastic that he had never used the elevator in the Seminary because every time he pressed the button it signalled "In use". Somebody always seemed to beat him to it.

Father Forner was tall, heavily built, and when his football days were over put on weight. He lived on the priests' flat at St. Michael's College, Toronto, opposite Father Robert McBrady who used to refer to him as:

"Old Ponderosity".

One morning in the Spring of 1929, Father McBrady came back from saying Mass at St. Joseph's Convent and not feeling well went to bed. It was the first time in many years that he was sick enough to stay in bed. Dr. Knowlton was called and diagnosed a severe case of pneumonia. The Superior was advised that Father McBrady would have to stay in bed and that he would require nursing care. The first nurse arrived and when Father McBrady saw her enter his room, he tried to get out of bed. He was so weak that she easily kept him under the covers. Finally he did manage to sit up and exclaim:

"Things have come to a pretty pass when a man can be constrained to his bed by a pair of impudent hussies."

Speaking at the Golden Jubilee of Assumption College in 1920, an occasion which was also the fiftieth anniversary of his own association with the college, Father McBrady remarked:

"I feel that I am in an age that I know not."

When Monsignor James Sheridan came to Toronto early in the century as a newly ordained priest from Ireland, he felt lonely and a fellow priest brought him up to St. Michael's College for the patronal feast on September 29th. Father McBrady preached at the High Mass, recalling the early days of the College and the bene-factions of Captain Elmsley. A dinner followed and afterwards Msgr. Sheridan found an opportunity to congratulate the preacher on his sermon. He also said something about what a fine man Captain Elmsley must have been.

"He was a pompous ass", replied Father McBrady.

From that moment Msgr. Sheridan began a life-long friendship with the Basilians.

One Sunday evening, about 1918, the appointed preacher did not show up for the evening sermon in St. Basil's Church. Father Joseph Muckle turned to Father McBrady and said:

"You'll have to preach, Father McBrady."

"I can't. I am not prepared", answered Father McBrady who always wrote out his sermons and memorized them.

"But I have preached without preparation", rejoined Father Muckle who was only a few years ordained at the time.

"And it sounded like it", came back Father McBrady.

Many amusing stories are told about Father McBrady during his last years when his memory began to fail. One day he reported to the Superior, Father Henry Bellisle, that he had locked himself out of his room. The treasurer was not around to provide a duplicate key. Finally a confrere with great difficulty pried open the transom, crawled down inside the room and opened the door. Father McBrady thanked him graciously and remarked:

"Now if I was in Annonay I would not have put you to all this trouble because I have a key for my room at Annonay."

And with this he pulled out of his pocket the key to his room at St. Michael's.

When Father McCann was teaching Theology at Assumption University of Windsor, he was asked to give a spiritual conference to the scholastics who were studying there. He opened the conference with these words:

"Just because you are going round in circles, don't think that you are a big wheel with God."

Father McCorkell during his term of office as Superior of St. Michael's College one day appointed Father Oliver to preach at St. Joseph's Convent. Father Michael Oliver asked:

"What shall I preach on?"

Father McCorkell, thinking of the poor acoustics in the old chapel at the convent answered after a moment of thought:

"They won't be able to hear you. Preach on anything you want."

One day Father McCorkell went to hear Professor-Poet E.J. Pratt read selections from his poetry in Convocation Hall under the auspices of the Catholic Women's League. Afterwards he met in a group a girl with whom he had attended school in Orillia. He knew her maiden name but could not recall her married name and therefore opened the conversation by asking:

"Have you ever heard Professor Pratt recite his poetry before?"

She smiled at him and suddenly it dawned on him that his classmate was now Mrs. Pratt.

"And she told the story all over the University of Toronto", lamented Father McCorkell.

In conversation Father McCorkell was famous for little side remarks. These sometimes came out elsewhere, not always intentionally. He was preaching at the funeral of Father Francis A. Walsh in St. Anne's Church, Detroit:

"Father Walsh was a popular priest. He had many friends — of one sort or another."

Those who did not know Father Mcorkell took the aside as a description of the varied people who were friends of Father Walsh. Those who knew the preacher ecognized in the remark some disapproval of certain friends.

Father Macdonald was heavily built, well over 200 pounds in weight. His brother was a medical doctor and quite concerned about Gordon's weight problem. One day he wrote a long letter suggesting a reducing program. This well-intentioned but unsolicited advice was resented by Gordon who showed his displeasure by enclosing in an envelope the last sermon he had preached and mailing it to his brother.

Father T.A. MacDonald was always an active man and had small sympathy for those who were not working. When Father Joseph Willett sick and unable to teach, though active enough in many other ways, Father MacDonald maintained:

"The only lazy man from New Brunswick."

When Father Willett died, one confrere reproached him:

"Maybe now you will admit that he was sick."

"Sick nothing. Just too lazy to breathe."

Dr. Francis Leddy, Dean of Arts at the University of Saskatchewan and later President of the University of Windsor was a great admirer of Father McGahey. Among his stories about him was one how as a young priest he found himself in North Bay and went to the cathedral rectory. A priest opened the door and invited him in. Then Father McGahey noticed that the elderly priest had a bit of red showing underneath his collar. A little embarrassed at having called him "Father" he apologized:

"You must be at least a Monsignor".

Raising his hand and tapping Father McGahey's head with his episcopal ring, Bishop Scollard repeated:

"At least a Monsignor. At least a Monsignor".

An apocryphal version has it that the Bishop conked him on the head with the episcopal ring.

Father McGouey was an ardent gardener when he was on the staff of St. Mary's Boys' High School in Calgary. He was quite proud of the grounds around the Basilian residence, but one problem baffled him, namely dandelions in the lawn. Pulling them out was not the answer. The suggestions of neighboring gardeners were likewise ineffective, so he wrote to the Alberta Department of Agriculture. The answer came quickly in a letter full of sympathy for his problem. There was a long explanation of the failure of the remedies that had been tried and the letter concluded:

"Father, you will just have to learn to love them."

Father McGuire attended the centennial of the Basilian Fathers in Owen Sound, 1863-1963. Included in the events of the day long celebration was the blessing of St. Basil's School on the west side of town. A large crowd turned out, but no public address system had been provided and only those close to the platform could hear the speakers. Those at the back of the crowd could not. Among those on the fringe was Father McGuire who was greeting old acquaintances. Later in the day a confrere who had not attended the blessing asked Father McGuire:

"John, how were the speeches?"

"Fine. They didn't interfere with conversation at all", was the reply.

When Father McGuire was Superior at St. Thomas High School in Houston, on Good Friday morning after an early Mass of the Pre-Sanctified, Fathers Joseph Muckle, Emil Plourde and Simon Perdue went out and played golf. On their return they were talking about their game until Father McGuire put in:

"If I were you, I would not boast about playing golf on Good Friday."

When Father McGuire was superior of St. Thomas High School, Houston, the staff was small. One evening they were enjoying a poker game. Father Joseph Muckle had a run of poor cards and to change his luck he took the deck of cards and threw it across the community room. Father Simon Perdue was there as a scholastic, aged 29, and of course the scholastic was expected to help Father Muckle pick up the cards. Father Muckle's luck did not change, and a second time he threw the cards. This time Father McGuire showed displeasure at such a way of breaking a jinx by telling Mr. Perdue:

"Let Father Muckle pick up his own cards."

When Father Oliver Moloney was chaplain of St. Michael's Hospital he acquired some local reputation for being able to visit a patient at the moment of death. Father McGuire was a patient there but the doctor had given no warning of an early death. His breathing would stop and then start again. Father Malley was keeping a bedside vigil and took a few minutes to glance at the morning paper. Father Moloney came into the room:

"Father McGuire isn't breathing."

"I know. His breathing stops and starts."

"But Father, it isn't starting again."

Father Moloney had arrived just at the moment of death.

One day when discussing some action of Father Robert Scollard, Father McLaughlin remarked:

"He is a man who always acts on principle. He makes them up as he goes along."

After his appointment as Superior of St. Michael's College, Father McLaughlin broke with tradition by having the treasurer, Father Thomas MacDonald keep a supply of liquor in his office and it was there that the Superior entertained guests. One day Father Louis Bondy who was disturbed by this violation of an existing rule pointed out to Father McLaughlin that all liquor should be kept in the Superior's office and not in the treasurer's.

"That's the way I like it and the way it will be", was the brief and to the point answer of Father McLaughlin.

Describing his visit to a wake, Father McLaughlin remarked that when the funeral parlor closed he was invited to the home of the deceased for an Irish wake that did more to console the living than to help the dead.

Father McBrady was both the soul of charity and the master of the apt phrase. One day seeing a man who required assistance to keep on his feet he observed:

"I would not say he was drunk, but the color of his physiogonomy invites criticism."

When Father McRae was a scholastic at St. Basil's Seminary, Father Francis Orsini one day invited him to his office to talk about complaints concerning the meals and in particular concerning a "farm sausage" that had been on the menu rather regularly. Father McRae explained his position in these words:

"You have misunderstood me, Father. The reason I was not eating the "farm sausage" was not that I objected to it, but because so few were eating it that I felt if I ate it I would not be eating the common fare."

At the centennial dinner of the Basilian Fathers in Windsor, 1870-1970, Father Malley said of Cardinal George Flahiff when introducing head table guests:

The Superior General used to live at St. Basil's Seminary until the 1960 General Chapter when a motion of mine that they move to a separate curial residence found favor. After that every time he saw me, Father Flahiff saw red. Now every time I see him, I see red."

The St. Michael's College Junior A hockey team of which Father Mallon was the manager had very fast skaters during their championship years of 1944-45 and 1945-46. Father Mallon thought that opposing teams when playing on their home ice tried to slow down the St. Michael's skaters by keeping the ice soft in their rinks. In retaliation he arranged with Maple Leaf Gardnes to have the ice surface swpet and flooded between each period as in professional games. After a hard fought series with Oshawa the College team was ahead 7-0 at the end of the second period in what would be the final game. This was played in Oshawa. There was little the home team fans could cheer for. One was heard to console others with these words:

"At least we don't have to watch them flodding the rink with holy water between periods."

When they were youngsters growing up in St. Basil's Parish, Toronto, Father Robert S. Miller and the future biochemist, Peter Moloney, for want of something better to do decided to visit Father Marijon. Father Marijon concealed any surprise at this and expressed himself as delighted with the visit.

"You have come to see me. I must get you something."

He went to his room and came back with a small box of candy for each one. They thanked him profusely and went home. A few days later they decided to visit Father Marijon again. Once more he expressed his pleasure:

"You have come to see me. I must get something for you."

This time he returned from his room with two holy cards. The two boys never went back to visit him.

Father Moloney urged Father Pierre Tourvieille to accept a foundation in Toronto in a letter dated March 30, 1852. He described himself as satisfied with his life in Toronto:

"because I am over my head in work, and I do not have even time to get tired."

Shortly after his appointment as Director of Formation in 1965, Father Mosteller went on a visit to the Basilian Houses in Ottawa. Father Wilfrid Dwyer took him to the Newman House at Carleton University and introduced him to a group of students, title and all. Then he added:

"Perhaps he will be forming some of you one day."

One young man put in:

"Well I am safe. I am an Anglican."

To this Father Mosteller quietly rejoined:

"I was an Anglican when I was in University."

When Father Carr was Superior General he used to invite Father Moylan who had been in the Novitiate with him into his room for a game of bridge. Father Moylan was at that time suffering from sleeping sickness. One day he took a long time to make his play and Father Carr reminded him:

"It's your play, Tom."

"I know, but it would help if I could keep my eyes open", was Father Moylan's explanation of the delay.

Father Moylan one day gave this advice to Father Jack Spratt on how to get along with Superiors:

"Listen humbly. Don't contradcit him. Then do as you please."

Father Muckle could be brusk when greeting newcomers at St. Michael's College. One morning he spotted a big redheaded priest in the college refectory, Father Fitzpatrick from Brooklyn. He went up to him and in his pre-emptory manner said:

"Muckle's the name. What's yours? What are you going to be doing?"

"No time for social conventions. I'm here to study", replied Father Fitzpatrick without so much as shaking hands.

Needless to say he left within a month, leaving behind a string of legends.

Father E.J. O'Neill enjoyed good health during the last twenty years of his life until a stomach complaint was diagnosed as cancer and he was given about six months to live. Shortly after this became known, Father Muckle observed him reading a novel in his room. He came down to Father Henry Bellisle who was Superior of St. Michael's College and stormed:

"That man has only six months to live. He should be preparing for death."

"He has been told. He knows and is preparing for death", replied Father Bellisle quietly.

In fact Father O'neill lived a full year beyond the six months given to him. He lived his usual life until a couple of months before the end.

To observe the centennial of the Basilians at Assumption, 1870-1970, Assumption University granted thirteen honorary degrees. Former superiors were invited to the convocation and the festivities that followed. During these one confrere said to Father T.A. MacDonald:

"You should have gotten one of those degrees. You were the one who kept Assumption from bankruptcy during the de;ression years."

Father MacDonald replied:

"I got one eight years ago and not once have I been called Doctor."

Father "Jim" Magee was a man of few words. One confrere observed:

"He is not the man to say a word if none will do."

Father Malley acted at the centennial dinner of the Basilians in Windsor, 1870-1970, as the toastmaster. He made a point of trying to bring as many names as possible and these references delighted the audience. In contrast to the speakers the toastmaster was lengthy, so when Bishop Carter was called upon for the final speech, he said:

"We should be able to finish up a few minutes after ten, unless Father Malley gets loose again."

One day Father Mulcahy described to interested conferes how he became a Basilian. As an undergraduate he had attended most of the social functions in most of the colleges of the University of Toronto and had served as sports editor of The Varsity. After graduating in 1932 he talked with Father McCorkell about becoming a priest and a Basilian. Father McCorkell advised:

"Get a job and work for a couple of years until you settle down."

Matt added:

"I took eight."

First he thought of studying law, one of his uncles was a lawyer and later a judge. He called up Osgoode Hall and found that the fees were $150, payable in advance. In the depression years this was a large sum, so he called up the Ontario College of Education and was told that tuition was $50 and should, if possible, be paid before Christmas. This decided him to become a teacher.

The farmers at the Irish Block in Owen Sound parish asked Father Murphy to pray for a badly needed rain. Father Murphy prayed, and it rained and rained and rained. Thereafter when they needed rain the farmers asked Father Murphy:

"Father! Say a little prayer for rain."

When Father Norman Murphy was Moderator of Scholastics at Assumption College, scholastics spent several hours a day in manual labor during the summer months. This entailed considerable supervision of their work on his part. He was therefore nicknamed:

"Norman the foreman."

His work assingments were not always kindly received but in after years most of his scholastics spoke of him as one of the most considerate of Moderators.

Holy Rosary Parish used the Novitiate Chapel for all services when Father Murphy was pastor. At this time Father Daniel Cushing was confessor for the novices and also heard in the chapel. He was a popular confessor and on Saturday there would be a long line in front of his confessional. Father Murphy would cough, stamp his feet, etc., to let people know he was also hearing. He would get out of his confessional and walk up and down. Still the people went to Father Cushing. One evening Father Murphy stormed into the sacristy and told the novice who was laying vestments for Sunday Mass:

"When Father Cushing is hearing, everybody wants to go to him. When he is not around, then any man, woman or child will do."

Father "Fish" Murray loved to preach. On the feast of the Transfiguration one year he went to say Mass in the Central Prison, then on Queen Street West in Toronto, and forgetting where he was gave out as his text: "Lord it is good for us to be here."

In his simplicity he told his conferes about his sermon and word of it got around to the students. A few weeks later he forgot about a sleep-in that had been granted to the students and went to call them at the usual time. They greeted him with the words:

"Lord it is good for us to be here".

Then they rolled over and went back to sleep.

Father William "Pike" Murray retained a dry sense of humor even late in life when his memory began to fail him. One day at Strawberry Island he saw a group of confreres making their way to the chapel and enquired why. On being told it was to say Compline, he remarked:

"I don't have to go. I am dispensed from office. I am now ex-officio."

When Father Murray's memory failed noticeably in his early 80's, he still surprised many by what he did remember. When Father Robert Scollard told him about the death of Father Robert Fischette, he asked:

"Did you know him?"

"Of course I knew him. I had him in the Novitiate."

Father Fischette entered on the fifth of August in 1931, and at the end of the month Father E.J. McCorkell was appointed Master of Novices.

In his 80's Father Murray's memory failed badly. One morning he came down to breakfast and told a confrere:

"My memory is going. I can't remember a thing."

"Why don't you do something about it?"

"About what?"

Father Murray's memory was slow when he got up from sleep, either a night's rest or a short nap.

In his later years Father "Pike" Murray was quite forgetful. One day Father Donald Faught charged him:

"Were you at Strawberry Island this summer?"

"Yes, I was."

"How come you can remember being there when you forget what happened this morning?

"I was there because I don't remember not being there", was Father Murray's explanation.

In his later years Father Murray was absent-minded. Assumption University observed the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination on October 18, 1964, and he was invited to give Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 5:30 and then be the guest of honor at dinner in the University of Windsor Centre. At 5:20 he went to Father Edward Pappert to obtain help with his collar button, explaining that he was putting on his suit because the dinner was in the University Centre. Father Pappert reminded him:

"But Father, there is Benediction first!"

"It will be all right to go in my suit."

"But Father you are scheduled to give it."

"O Yes. I forgot all about that."

When Father Terence McLaughlin was appointed superior of St. Michael's College in 1940, Father Thomas MacDonald was appointed treasurer. Father MacDonald came to his new post with the reputation of having been a tough superior at Assumption College and Father McLaughlin soon acquired a like reputation for strictness. In view of this Father O'Brien nicknamed them: "T N T".

A baseball game was played each night during the priests's retreat at St. Michael's College, Toronto, in 1948. Age took its toll and the composition of the teams varied from night to night. Few played all four games. While watching the game on Friday night Father E.J. McCorkell remarked to Father Reg O'Donnell:

"You were out a couple of times, weren't you?"

"Yes Father, once to get a ticket for Detroit and the other time to the drugstore".

Father O'Donnell's face was somewhat reddened because he had not botthered asking the Superior General permission to leave the retreat for the two short times.

"Oh! I want's talking about that. I meant the baseball game."

When Father O'Donohue was stationed at St. Basil's Parish, Toronto, he baptized Father Robert S. Miller. In the corridor after the baptism he met Father McBrady:

"Mac. I never thought Dan Miller would do such a thing."

"What has he done?" queried Father McBrady who was a good friend of Mr. Miller's.

"Oh it is a terrible thing!"

"But what has he done?"

"He has gone and called his son Robert."

Father Francis Powell, a former Basilian was visiting Father John Glavin at St. Michael's College and during his visit Father Oliver came into the treasurer's office. Father Powell greeted him and asked:

"What are you doing you, Mike?"

At the time Father Oliver was attached to St. Basil's Parish, had something to to do with St. Michael's College Social Guild, and was involved in Marylake Farm School. He told about these activities, never really completing a sentence. When he finished, Father Powell observed:

"You are not being very clear, Mike."

One day at Assumption College Father Oliver asked Father Wilfrid Sharpe to listen to a play he had written. When he finished reading he asked:

"What do you think of it, Willie?"

Father Sharpe was a completely honest man:

"Gee whiz, Mike, I got thinking about something else."

When the appointments that named him treasurer of St. Charles College, Sudbury, were opened at Aquinas Institute, Father Edward O'Reilly exclaimed to his conferes:

"Who can fathom the mind of the General Council?"

When things went wrong Father O'Rourke used to philosophize:

"Next year we won't have all this trouble. It will be something else."

Father Simon Perdue and Father Charles Collins at one time both assistants in Amherstburg. When the pastor was absent, Father Collins would take his duties as acting pastor very seriously and he felt that a recently ordained priest should not be out after nine o'clock in the evening. At the same time he was scrupulous and dreaded taking a sick call. When Father Perdue wanted to visit longer with friends, he would make two phone calls. Disguising his voice he would pretend to be the relative of a sick person and ask that a priest come:

"It is not urgent, but we would like him tonight if possible."

He would wait a few minutes, leaving Father Collins torn between going at once and hoping that somehow he could be excused. Then Father Perdue would make a second call:

"Has anything happened while I was out?"

Father Collins would tell him about the sick call and he would offer to go at once. Then he would return home at his own convenience.

One day Fathers Perdue, Henry Bellisle, Joseph Kennedy, Robert McBrady and a few other confereres were gathered after dinner at the foot of the stairs in the original St. Michael's College building. Father Perdue got Father McBrady into a discussion about knowledge of French. Soon he turned the subject on whether Father McBrady knew more French than Father Kennedy and he undertook to settle it:

"Let each recite a piece in French and I will say who does it best."

Father McBrady's mental power had slipped in his 80's and he began to recite from memory a passage of classical French prose. When it came Father Kennedy's turn, he declined saying:

"When I recite French it will be for someone who knows a little French."

The confreres gave him a big hand for this retort. It was not often that Father Perdue came out second best.

Father Michael'Pickett's father was an old-time lumberman who never seemed to remember that his son had grown up. Once Father Pickett took Fathers Henry Carr and Thomas MacDonald home for dinner. Mr. Pickett asked Father Carr to come upstairs with him. Everyone knew that he was going to offer Father Carr a drink. Once they were upstairs and the door closed, his brother-in-law softened the exclusion by offering a drink to the "young priests". During the meal Mr. Pickett provoked his son into saying:

"Father, you forget that I am 55. You still think I am only 15."

"So you are 55 now. I hand't thought about it", assented the old gentlemen in a fatherly tone suited to addressing a ten year old.

When Father Pickett returned from serving overseas as a chaplain in the War of 1914-1918, he was appointed to St. Thomas High School in Houston. This was not to his liking and he announced that if it was not changed he would leave the Congregation. He telephoned his mother to tell her about his decision:

"I am coming right over. Don't do a thing until we have a talk."

She came over, and heard the full story of how having been away from the heart of the Congregation for years he did not want to go into what was for him more isolation in the small house in Texas. Mrs. Pickett's talk was brief:

"When you entered the Basilians there was no stipulation about where you would be sent. You have been told to go to Texas. You go to Texas. If you are told to go somewhere else, you go there."

He accepted this counsel and as it happened his appointment was changed to Assumption College.

Father Platt was a lover of puns. They were his favorite type of humor. In 1960 Father Gerard Todd was crippled with arhtritis and rheumatism so that in walking he regularly dragged his right leg. Observing him in the halls of St. Basil's Seminary, Father Platt burst out:

"There goes Father Todd toddling along."

When Father Purcell was a newly ordained priest, priest confreres did not say Mass during the annual retreat for lack of altars. Father Purcell thought this should be changed and next year arranged for a number of temporary altars, vestments, etc. The priests showed their appreciation by giving him a box of 100 cigars. He loved to somke cigars and delighted in a box he could reach into and not feel the bottom. The presentation was made at the Thursday meal when a 'Benedicamus' permitted conversation during the meal.

When Father Purcell was a scholastic, his group would sit up to see the New Year in, then at the stroke of twelve he would lead them in the Rosary, his greeting to the New Year.

There was always rivalry between Fathers Daniel Meader and Father Purcell. In his last year at St. Michael's College, Father Meader was in charge of the Irish flat and had an office with a bedroom attached. This had been repainted and refurnished. When he went to Assumption College, Father Meader was assigned to the Irish Flat. Father Purcell was invited to comment on this:

"I hat to think of Meader just rolling around in my bed."

When he was pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Owen Sound, Father Roche was compelled to enter a hospital in Toronto for treatment. The housekeeper, who took particular care of him, came to Toronto to visit him and informed him that she intended to stay a few days and see to it that he was properly looked after. Father Roche's reaction came quickly:

"Go back to Owen Sound. And if you and Father John Spratt don't behave, I'll fire the two of you."

One summer Sunday Father Roche preached what he considered a very suitable sermon on the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Afterwards two American tourists, who were not seen very often in Owen Sound in the 1920's, came to him and after introducing themselves in the course of the conversation one of them told him:

"Father. We heard a sermon on that parable on the Sunday before we left our own parish. We stopped in to visit friends and again heard a sermon on that parable. We had hoped to escape it in Owen Sound."

Father Roche was heartbroken.

Father Plomer was appointed to teach a course in Victorian Literature to IV Arts at Assumption College after its affiliation with the University of Western Ontario. In his inaugural lecture he announced:

"We have a course in Victorian Literature. I went to the Superior to get some money to buy a few reference books. The money was not forthcoming so we will have to read the damn stuff."

Father Rush required prostate gland treatment in St. Joseph's Hospital. He was somewhat secretative about his ailment. On his return to St. Michael's College one inqisitive confrere met with this answer:

"I was penalized."

Fathers Paul Mallon, Louis Bondy and Leonard Rush were in Europe when World Ward 1939-1945 broke out. They all managed to get passage back to Canada on the same ship. On board they met a complete stranger who showed an interest in the three priests. By the time they disembarked, Fathers Mallon and Bondy still addressed by "Mr. ----", but Father Rush was calling him by his first name and had been made a present of the man's fur coat.

Father Rush was the first Principal of St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon and on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding he was invited to talk at an anniversary dinner. On his return to Toronto, he told the Superior General, Father Wey, about his trip and added that while many had said his talk was "wonderful", one person had confided to Father Peter Swan who was then Principal:

"Father Rush has had some fine dental work done on his teeth."

Father Leonard Rushknew, observed and propagated the norms of table etiquette. One day he was at table in a House where the confreres had acquired the habit of stacking the dishes as a convenience for the waiters. Observing this, he turned to his neighbor and asked:

"Are you of the gentry, or do you stack?"

Father Leonard Rush suffered a severe heart attack in 1962. At his residence, St. Michael's College, there were numerous stairs and no elevator. It was suggested to him that during his convalescence he might live across the street at St. Basil's Seminary where there was an elevator. He replied:

"Oh! I am not worthy."

He did go to St. Basil's Seminary and found life very pleasant with the scholastics all anxious to do him little services. A few weeks later a member of the seminary staff was asked how Father Rush was getting along:

"He is becoming more worthy every day."

In the Hotel-Dieu Hospital, Windsor, a few weeks before his death from cancer, one morning his breakfast was shortly followed by the coming of a nurse with a small bottle and a request for a specimen of urine. Noting a glass of apple juice on his tray, he quickly poured it into the bottle, as soon as the nurse left the room, then finished his breakfast. The breakfast tray was taken away and sometime later the nurse came to collect the specimen bottle. Father Ruth's little jokes were well known to the hospital staff and she innocently remarked:

"It looks muddy."

"In that case I'll run it rhough again".

Quickly he picked up the bottle and drank his apple juice before the astonished nurse.

Father Sands went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in February 1968 with his uncle, Msgr. Lesage of the Archdiocese of Ottawa. Before leaving he asked Forestell if there was anything he could do for him while he was in Jerusalem.

"Nothing", replied Terry Forestell, "but while you are there call on my old teacher, Father De Vaux, O.P., at L'Ecole Biblique."

Father Sands did this. The porter took him to Father De Vaux room and Father De Vaux received him graciously, put his arm around him, and guided him about a large room strewn with books and cigarette butts. In less than two minutes Father Sands found that he was in the corridor and Father De Vaux had locked the door to his room. The Scripture scholar would spend time with students but not with tourists.

One day in the course of a wide-ranging discussion on confreres, Father John M. Kelly observed:

"Scollard never changes his mind. I hope he never commits a mortal sin."

Father Vincent Fullerton once warned some conferes who were talking with Father Scollard:

"Be careful of what you say. He will either print it in The Basilian Annals, or file it away in the Archives."

A confrere complained to Father Bill Sheehan one day of the work he had been asked to do. Father Sheehan solaced him with these words:

"Do your best."

Then he added as an after thought:

"Your best is none too good."

Father Bill Sheehan had a number of favorite expressions. When a visitor came into his room he would invite him to sit down by saying:

"Take the load off your feet."

When the visitor left, he would admonish him:

"Take good care of yourself. Good men are scarce."

During the last session of the Second Vatican Council, Father Shook who was present as a "Peritus" and Archbishop George Flahiff met the English journalist Douglas Woodruff. The Archbishop had met him previously and he introduced Father Shook as the President of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto. Referring to conciliar suggestions for revising seminary training which would drop some courses in thomistic philosophy, Mr. Woodruff observed:

"Ah Yes! The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. You people are having some difficulty these days. Shall auld Aquinas be forgot?"

When Father Shook was first asked to give conferences to religious sisters, he was quite upset at seeing row after row of sisters with their eyes cast down - not one of them looking at him. Being used to the less formal atmosphere of the university lecture hall, he mentioned it to the Superior with the result that at the next conference every single one of the sisters glared at him throughout the entire conference. Thereafter he decided to let the sisters listen in their own way.

At St. Michael's College Father Spratt had missed meditation for a couple of days in a row. Just as he was going in to report to the Superior, he met Father Ben Forner in the corridor:

"Ben, I'm on the carpet."

"Be humble, Jack," came the answer.

Father Basil Sullivan served with distrinction for some years as chaplain of the University Hospital in Saskatoon. Bishop Klein admired him and one day told Archbishop Flahiff while praising him:

"He has unique methods. The first couple of times that he consulted me on problems he faced, I tried to give him an answer. Then I found out he had already gone ahead and acted. After that I simply told him to do what he thought best."

During one of the years that Father Johnny Sullivan spent as an assistant at St. Mary's Parish in Owen Sound, another confrere was transferred to this parish. After his arrival he talked and talked. Father Sullivan was no mean conversationalist himself, but after a while he grew tired of listened and finally counselled the newcomer:

"It is a long hard winter up here. You had better save some of that."

Father Thomson was an ardent football fan. When he could be at all free he gave all his attention to watch games on television and made it clear that he did not want to be disturbed. At Holy Rosary Church, Father Brian Inglis arrived to take up his duties as an assistant in the midst of an exciting game. Father John T. Kelly came into the community room and announced:

"Father Thomson! You have a visitor."

"Go away. Go away. I told you not to bring visitors in here when a football game is on."

Father Kelly persisted and this time announced the name of the visitor. Father Thomson was all apologies and made amends by insisting that Father Inglis watch the rest of the game with him.

One day Father Thomson told a few confreres the story of his vocation. He had visited Joe McGahey in the Novitiate and Joe had told him that the Basilians were on the verge of great things and strongly urged him to join. He went back to St. Michael's full of enthusiasm and waited in the corridor while Father Carr and Father Bellisle finished a game of billiards in the old community room. Then he asked Father Carr about joining:

"Come and see me in two weeks".

Two weeks later he appeared before Father Carr:

"I have not made up my mind. I will let you know later."

Father Thomson heard nothing all summer so in late August he went again to see Father Carr:

"If you still want to be a Basilian, go up to the Novitiate and see Father Wilfrid Sharpe."

When news of Father "Sham" O'Brien's sudden death in 1949 reached Amherstburg, Father Thomson was pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish. Father Viator McIntyre was an assistant and he began to hint about going to Toronto for the funeral:

"Are you going to the funeral?"

"No. He was not a Superior and I don't see any reason for going."

And nobody did go from Amherstburg parish.

Father Tighe was famous for his sayings. In the Novitiate he would often admonish the novice who sat at his right:

"Just because you are sitting at the right of the Master does not mean that you must get the second best piece of meat."

Upon hearing of the imprudent conduct of a confrere who was carried away by his enthusiasm for what he thought was a good work, Father Wey exclaimed:

"O God, deliver us from enthusiasms."

Father Whelan was famous for his joking manner with confreres. One summer when he was canvassing in New York State for students for St. Michael's College along with Father Daniel Forestell, they came to a small city that had two convents. Father Forestell went to one to ask the help of the Mother Superior, Father Whelan to the other. Father Whelan had to wait because the Principal, who was also Mother Superior, was engaged. In his joking manner and to pass the time he offered a cigarette to the sister who had answered the door. She refused, but he persisted:

"All sisters smoke."

Some minutes later the parlor door opened to admit not the Principal, but two policemen. A bogus priest had been reported in the neighborhood and they took him to the station for questioning. He had to wait until Father Forestell could be reached and come to identify him.

For many years the parents of Father Arthur O'Leary had a summer cottage at Harwood on Rice Lake. One weekend the pastor of Warkworth in whose parish this mission was located asked Father O'Leary if he would say the Mass and preach at it. Father O'Leary was a good preacher and he had just rewritten for his own use a sermon of Bishop Fulton Sheen on, "The Thrill of Monotony". In the following summer, Father Moe Whelan was visiting the O'Learys and he was ivnited to say Mass and preach. By a co-incidence he, too, had developed a sermon out of Bishop Sheen's"The Thrill of Monotony". After Mass, during breakfast he was not bashful about drawing attention to what he thought was a good sermon. Mrs. O'Leary was an honest and forthright woman:

"I liked it better the first time I heard it."

Father Sheedy was a High School Principal who was enthusiastic about his work and his school. He had lots of "drive" and pushed ahead with higher standards for staff and students. One teacher complained one day:

"With Father Sheedy, it is always Go, go, go. But go where?"

Father "Bob" Lowrey served as a chaplain overseas with the Canadian Army and won the Military Cross. He was always a strong conversationalist and after his return to civilian life was considered by some to be almost a compulsive talker on his war experiences. On Armistice Day, November 11th, one confrere innocently remarked:

"You will keep the two minutes silence at eleven, won't you?"

During a comparison of the work of priests teaching in high schools with that of priests teaching at the college level, and their respective difficulties, Father Abend exclaimed:

"They say it is cool in the college pool,
But I know it is darned hot
In the high school pot."

When Cardinal McGuigan returned to the parlor to unvest after ordaining eight Basilians on August 15, 1946, Father Robert Scollard who was Master of Ceremonies asked:

"Will Your Eminence go over to Brennan Hall for breakfast?"

"No Father. Just bring me some black coffee here."

In the kitchen atray had already been prepared, so Father Scollard brought it over. His Eminence beamed as he began to pour the coffee. No coffee came. The cook had forgotten to fill it. On his way back to the kitche, Father Scollard met Father McCorkell:

"Has His Eminence finished his thanksgiving?"

Apprised of what had happened Father McCorkell muttered:

"Then this is no time to go in and see him."

Father Brice Howard, a young Benedictine was invited to preach the priests' retreat at St. John Fisher College in the summer of 1965. While on campus he walked down to the Basilian House of Studies, met some scholastics and introduced himself as the retreat master.

"Give them hell, Father".

"But I thought new breed did not go in for such rretreats?"

"They are not new breed, Father".

Father Burns was a delightful personality, one with a gift for brightening routine. On one occasion when temporarily in charge of the scholastics at Assumption College, he introduced the points for meditation the next morning with this announcement:

"There will be meditation at ten to six in the morning, whether I am there or not."

On the priests' flat at Assumption College, Father Pat Howard was the jealous guardian of silence. A confrere who walked with a heavy and noisy step, or who engaged in loud conversation was greeted by him in a booming voice:

"Say man, do you think you are a freight train crossing a double track?"

When Father Aboulin died, Father Louis Bondy was invited to preach at his funeral with the understanding that it would be a bilingual sermon. When Father Aboulin's was opened, Father Vincent Kennedy, then Superior of Assumption College, found a request that there be no sermonat his funeral. It was not the first time that Father Bondy had prepared a sermon for the funeral of a deceased Basilian, only to learn later that in deference to his wishes there would be no sermon. Father Kennedy found a way to curve around the Will which was a very pious document two or three pages in length, he asked a priest to read the Will at the funeral.

Father Aboulin remained a French citizen all his life and was proud of it. For years this presented no difficulties when he crossed the border going from Assumption College to St. Anne's Parish in Detroit and viceversa. After he retired to Assumption College, the United States Immigration Laws were stiffened, but the abbé's visit were infrequent. However, there came a day when he wanted, had to go to St. Anne's for a celebration there. At the border the American official was friendly and helpful, asking the driver of the car:

"You are all from Assumption?"

"No. No.", burst out the abbé. "I am a French citizen."

All had to go into the office and a formal bond for $1,000 had to be posted that Father Aboulin would leave the United States within twenty-four hours. This last presented a new problem, because once at St. Anne's, he wanted to remain a longer visit.

Father Vincent Murphy was an economical treasurer, one who could not resist a bargain, regardless of the quantity involved. He was treasurer of St. Basil'sSeminary in 1929 and a salesman offered him a bargain on sacks of dried figs.

"It is quite a lot, Father, but at that price, and they keep indefinitely."

Father Murphy accepted and for the next couple of years enterprising scholastics were trying to find ways of getting rid of the figs without having to eat them.

Father Côté was constitutionally unable to keep a secret. When he was a member of the pronvcial council, Father Forster would admonish him time after time about keeping council business secret. Each time Father Côté would return to Windsor determined to say nothing. No one would directly ask him about council matters. Instead a group would discuss the business they thought the council had transacted. They would begin with the least likely solutions and these would draw from Father Côté a non-committal laugh. That meant no decision had been reached on that item. Next they would move from the possible to what they considered the probable, and once again his reactions were revealing. The big moment came when the leader of the discussion turned to what was most likely. He would put it in the form of an assertion: "the Council .... " Almost invariably this would be too much for Father Côté and without thinking he would blurt out:

"Somebody has been leaking again."

When he was Master of Novices, Father Victorin Marijon would calm youthful excitement by quoting the French proverb:

"Il faut prendre les choses comme elles sont."

For English-speaking novices he would translate it:

"Take things as there are."

Father "Mickey" Christian served for many years as Assistant Master of Novices. In his dealings with novices he was fond of using quotations, and not necessarily in English:

"Ne rien demander, ne rien refuser", was part of his teaching self-denial. To teach silence he would quote in Latin the words of the Book of Ecclesiastes:

"Tempus tacendi, tempus loquendi."

Father McNulty had a wonderful sense of humor. At St. Mary's Parish in Owen Sound, the housekeeper always gave Father Nicholas Roche eggs with a white shell. The assistants regularly were given brown-shelled eggs. Father McNulty was used to this and it did not bother him, but one day a newly appointed assistant noticed this habit of the housekeeper:

"Why does Father Roche always get eggs with a white shell?"

"Sign of purity", was Father McNulty's ready explanation.

Father McNulty was a man of visible prayer. He made a daily hour before the Blessed Sacrament and was usually in the church for another hour, saying the rosary, making short visits, and reciting parts of the divine office. One day he confided to Father Charles Collins:

"Long ago I decided that a man had to sanctify himself and that prayer was the great means within the reach of all to attain perfection."

One day Jim Ruth, Bob Fischette and Tom Daoust were riding in the back of the St. Michael's College truck which was carrying several milk cans filled with slop for the pigs at Annesi Farm. Going down a hill, the truck skidded and turned over, dumping the slop on the riders. It came to a stop on a railroad track. The truck was righted and able to continue on to the farm where the three scholastics had only cold water to wash off the smelly slop. Instead of complaining Jim remarked to his fellow riders:

"Maybe God meant this as a warning to be ready!"

Father "Tommy" Moylan was a man of few words in the classroom, holding that the best use of the tongue when teaching is to use it as little as possible. He was unassuming in conversation outside the class but when he did speak his words were worth listening to. Once he was heard to comment about a loquacious confrere:

"Isn't he the old talking machine?"

In his preaching Father "Buck" Heydon tried to be plain and practical. When he did not fully prepare his sermon and went on the "dabitur vobis" he occasionally blundered as when explaining the parable of the pharisee and the publican he was quoted as saying:

"Proud fellow, you know. Went right up to the front, rattling his beads, you know."

Father Martin normally remained silent when in the presence of others and in his own quiet way he would denounce those who talked a lot and said very little worth listening to:

"Chatterbox".

On the other hand whenever he heard a person criticized, he alwasy spoke up, usually to comment that when a man finds himself in a particular situation he is the one who should know best what is to be done.

Father Martin, "Sunny Jim" as he was nicknamed by students at St. Michael's College, took a rosy view of life. His lifetime extended over several external crises that deeply affected him. Whenever he heard anyone express anxiety over the future his faith led him to quote the proverb:

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

Father McBrady was ordained in the chapel of the old Bishop's Palace at Assumption Church. In later years he was wont to emphasize its smallness by declaring:

"My feet stuck outside the door when I prostrated for the Litany of the Saints."

When asked about his First Mass, he would say that he was ordained in the morning and taught his classes in the afternoon, adding:

"I might have gone home, but it would have left the school short-handed."

Father McBrady was an outstanding pulpit orator. He prepared his sermons carefully and would rehearse them as if he had 500 people listening to them. He was not not above copying entire passages from the great preachers of 17th and 18th century France. Once when he had given a special sermon in a Toronto parish, the pastor told the curate:

"That was too good to have been given for the first time."

Research on their part tracked down Father McBrady's source. One year at Assumption College he was called upon to preach the May devotions in place of Father Michael Ferguson who was ill. Father R.T. Burke, who was studying theology at Assumption, made this comparison in his diary:

"Father Ferguson speaks with plain simple language of sublime ideas beautifully put. Father McBrady's ideas are common but expressed in language fit only for the gods."

Father "Joe" Kennedy was a dreamer and when he had something on his mind, he could forget appointments. As one pastor put it:

"You could tell from his sermons that he was a priest who made his meditation every day, but you could never be sure beforehand that he would get to your church in time to preach them."

This characteristic followed him in death. The appointed hour for his funeral came. His coffin was in the church, but no celebrant was in the sacristy. Minutes passed, then a phone call to the Chancery office established the fact that Archbishop James McGuigan had completely forgotten about promising to sing the Funeral Mass. After making his apologies, he asked Father Carr, who had already said Mass privately, to sing the Funeral Mass.

The presence of Father Bellisle was always a source of joy to his conferes who nicknamed him "Happy". There was always lively conversation when he was around, and he had a knack of turning it to the virtuous side of things. Once he was asked:

"What commandment is broken most frequently?"

"Don't be silly. Charity."

Father "Con" Sheehan attended the Ontario College of Education in Toronto with Father "Joe" McGahey. By pre-arrangement they sat at opposite sides of the room in the class of Professor Peter Sandiford who taught educational psychology and who had a favorite way of getting attention, namely to make shocking statements. Father McGahey promptly challenged all statements that he considered at variance with thomistic philosophy, sometimes to the point of exasperating his professor:

"This is a class of psychology, not theology."

Father Sheehan on the other hand would ask the professor to explain more fully his point of view and he would take issue with Father McGahey's statements. Between them they gave the class a good outline of Catholic principles.

At the end of the year, Professor Sandiford offered "Con" a scholarship to do advanced work in educational psychology.

Father Savoye was a priest whose devotion to duty was exemplary in the highest degree. His last words as he lay dying in the hospital at Annonay, France, were:

"Study has finished, I must get up and go to teach my class."

The ringing of a bell somewhere in the hospital brought forth these last words.

Father Cushing had a brother who was also a Basilian. John was fourteen years older and had died before his younger brother entered the Novitiate. One day towards the end of his life, when he was no longer able to say Mass, Father Dan asked a young confrere:

"Would you remember my brother at your Mass tomorrow?"

The priest agreed to do this and thinking that the brother had died recently offered his sympathy.

"Yes", replied the invalid, "Tomorrow is porr John's sixtieth anniversary."

Father Vernède was a native of France who was slow acquiring a good working knowledge of English. Students at Assumption began to ask permission to leave the study-hall in words designed to amuse other students. Father Vernède suspected that something was wrong and spoke to Father O'Connor who asked him if he could repeat some of the words they were using. Father O'Connor did not embarrass him by explaining what they were saying:

"Send the next boy to see me."

The next time Father Vernède took study-hall it was not long before a hand went up:

"Tan my hide, Father?"

"You go to Father O'Connor. He will tan your hide."

Soon one of his troubles ended.

When Assumption Church was built, the south wall was solid brick with the altars placed against it. Later Father O'Connor built the present sanctuary, but the only opening he made in the wall was the one in front of the main altar. For years students from Assumption attended the High Mass in the parish church and sat in seats on either side of the sanctuary, cut off from the view of parishioners by the walls. During the sermon, especially if it was in French, some students would sneak out and lie around in the grass outside. One day Father Mungovan was asked to exercise his office of Director of Studies and scold thestudents for lying around in the wet grass during the Sunday morning sermon. The next time he preached to the student body Father Mungovan brought his sermon to a close with this advice:

"Keep your feet dry and your head cool."

Father Arsène Martin was a priest who never lost his youth. He was well liked by the students of St. Michael's College and would often drop into his office where one day he showed a student the sum of $1,000 in large bills. The student showed interest and while reaching out his hand asked:

"What would you do, Father, if someone tried to rob you?"

Before his had was across the desk he found himself covered by a large, ugly looking revolver whose existence had never been suspected. Père Martin, as he loved to be called, was not careless in the fulfillment of his duties.

On the occasion of Father Denis O'Connor's silver jubilee of ordination, Bishop John Walsh asked Pope Leo XIII to confer on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. The Bishop conferred the degree on September 20, 1888. The next day the older students came to Father O'Connor's office and asked for a holiday giving as their reason the new title;

"Dr. O'Connor."

"Boys you may have a holday today on one condition, namely that you never again call me Dr. O'Connor."

Father Buckley belonged to the class of men who are considered intellectually weak but who have other good qualities suiting them to the priesthood. Father Buckley was very weak in his knowledge of Latin. Archbishop Lynch refused to ordain him priest and his ordination was delayed two years until with the death of the Archbishop, the Auxiliary Bishop agreed to ordain him. Bishop Timothy O'Mahoney was particular about the pronounciation of Latin and several times stopped the ceremony and made Father Buckley repat words until he pronounced them to the Bishop's satisfaction.

Father Morley was an Englishman. His favorite recreation was walking and he never let rain keep him from a walk. One dreary, drizzly day he tried to get father Howard to accompany him.

"Morley, you're crazy."

"Pat, you're lazy."

Father Frachon was a capable moral theologian, a popular confessor and a master of the spiritual life. He was terse in giving advice, especially to young women who entered in religious communties where he exercised his priestly ministry:

"If you are a good postulatn, you will be a good novice. If you are a good novice, you will be a good professed, and when you die you will go to heaven and see Our Lady. If you are not a good postulatn, you will not be a good novice. If you are not a good novice, you will not be a good professed. If you are not a good professed, you will be good for nothing.

For many years Father Frachon taught theology to students who were studying for the priesthood while teaching junior classes at St. Michael's College. He was a competent moral theologian, but often was to sit in on other examinations when they were oral. Near his home in France was "Mont Pilat". Whenever he was on an examination board in church history, his first questionwas:

"Who died in Gaul?"

The correct answer was:

"Pontius Pilate."

Once given, the student could make all kinds of mistakes and Father Frachon would overlook them.

Father Michael Ferguson was a friend of Sir John A. Macdonald, for many years Prime Minister of Canada. Once he wrote to Sir John on behalf of a pastor asking that the duty payable on a church organ be remitted. Sir John answered on September 16, 1887:

"My dear Father Ferguosn,

"On receiving your favour of the 12th inst. I sent to the Department of Customs, and I regret to say the authorities informed me that they have no power by law to remit the duty on the church organ. It appears that under the tariff act only church bells and communion plate can be admitted free so there is no help for it and you must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

As a student at St. Michael's College, Thomas McGwann thought of being a priest but could not bring himself to making the necessary decision. He put it off a year by attending the Ontario College of Education. His doubts continued, so he taught for two years at De La Salle in Toronto. Father Nicholas Roche understood the situation and decided to make up Tom's mind for him. Meeting Tom on the street during the summer of 1916 he spoke to him:

"Tom the retreat at the Novitiate begins next Tuesday. I am preaching it. You had better make it."

"But Father I haven't made up mind to be a priest."

"Ididn't say be a priest. I said make my retreat."

Tom went to the retreat. On the fourth day, Father Roche called him to his room:

"This is the fourth day of the retreat. The time is going fast and you haven't got your application in for the Novitiate. You had better have it ready tomorrow."

This terrified Tom. He had to make a decision, and make it by tomorrow. He sought the advice of two scholastics whom he had knwon as an undergraduate, Daniel Dillon and John McGuire. They advised putting the problem before the spiritual director, Father Cushing. He did so, afterwards reported to his friends, mimicing Father Cushing's voice, blinking his eyes, and stroking an imaginary beard:

"Mr. McGwan, you have been doing too much thinking. You have put your hand to the plough. Don't turn back. If the Almighty does not want you to be a priest, you will not be one; you'll lose an eye or an arm."

Father Purcell was a good example of the impractical professor. He was not absent-minded. He could remember things. He knew what he should do, but he was often uncertain as to how to do them. Once when he came on a visit to Toronto a confrere enquired:

"Who loaded him on the train?"

Father Crespin was physically, short, thick set and tremendously strong. He was mentally a hypochondriac, one who was very careful about drafts and colds At St. Michael's College he was in charge of the library, then located next to St. Basil's Church, off the Priests' Flat. One day in winter Father John Plomer saw him go into the library and locked the door on the outside. Father Crespin had intended to stay for only a minute or two, but it was some time before the door was opened to let him out. He knew who had locked the door and rushed to his room in a frenzy. He picked up an axe he kept there to chop wood for his stove and went looking for Father Plomer. It was some time before Father Crespin cooled down and it was safe for Father Plomer to come out of hiding. It was not long after this incident that Father Crespin was taken to an institution in Montreal.

Father Collins was always cracking jokes and these were accompanied by a very serious facial expression. He taught religious knowledge at Assumption College and when he entered the classroom would often sniff loudly and then complain of the odor. He might in good weather ask that the windows be opened. Then he would discover the blackboard:

"Ah! Now i know what caused that odor. Somone has been teaching a dead language."

Asked to describe Father Cherrier, Father M.V. Kelly replied:

"Saintly but singular".

He went on to explain:

"Two ambitions governed his whole life. One was to live to be a hundred, the other was to escape Purgaotry."

He lived to be ninety and in so far as man can judge came at least as close to achieving the second.

Father DuMouchel was strongly opposed to the change of the vow of poverty made at the 1922 general chapter. At a famous meeting to explain the new vow and to secure their support for it, he spoke against it describing the proposed change as:

"trying to lift ourselves up to heaven by our suspenders."

Another version of his speech, and possibly he did use both comparisons, was:

"trying to lift ourselves up by our bootlaces."

For many years Father "Fish" Murray was in charge of the Junior Sodality at St. Michael's College. On one occasion the members voted overwhelmingly for a very popular boy whom he felt would not make a good prefect. Gravely he announced the result of the ballotting:

"The vote now stands 15-1 for A. My vote is worth 15 votes. I give it to B. The vote now stands 16-15 in favor of B. I declare B elected prefect."

Father Edmund Murray was a priest who advanced in years without growing old. On his 80th birthday he danced the Highland Fling in the community room of St. Michael's College. But neither his boyish enthusiasms nor his robust health could spare him from one sign of age: he grew bald. On one occasion when he was visiting the Asylum on Queen Street West in Toronto he noticed acouple of women patients looking at him rather intently. Then one of them put her hand to her head and said to the other:

"Let's give Father some of our hair."

When Father Francis Hours died in 1897, Father Peter Grand asked Assumption College to send some boys to St. Anne's in Detroit to serve at his funeral. By chance First Philosophy was chosen. The senior class, Second Philosophy was indignant and sent a deputationto protest to the Director of Studies. Francis Hewlett, later a pastor in Detroit, was chosen as their spokesman. Father Mungovan heard him and and then laughingly asked:

"Hewlett, you fool Hewlett! Sure do you want to be making a celebration of a funeral?"

When he was appointed Archbishop of Toronto, Denis O'Connor took the insistence of the Holy See that he accept the post as approval of the policies he had followed in the Diocese of London. Therefore he would brook no interference. He refused to allow the Knights of Columbus in the Archdiocese on the ground that there were too many societies already. A delegation from Buffalos, headed by Father Michael Fallon who was later to be appointed Bishop of London, asked him to reconsder. He listened to an eloquent plea and then said:

"Now Father Fallon you can go back to Buffalo and look after your parish, and I'll look after the Archdiocese of Toronto."

Father Semande was an extremely good priest who always did his work and did it well. His eyes were piercing, his step deliberate, his tongue sharp, and his whole manner maintained the dignity of the priesthood. On the first Sunday after his appointment as pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Amherstburg, a young couple were doing public penance for getting married before a minister. The penance at that time consisted of their sitting in a prominent pew while a sermon was preached on the evil of their sin. Father Semande began:

"I am ashamed! I am ashamed! I am ashamed!"

With each repittion the scorn in his voice mounted and before he finished the couple knew what public penance meant.

When Archbishop d'Aviau secretly re-entered France in May 1797, one of his first acts was to open a Grand Seminary for the Diocese of Viviers. The students were few in number, twelve to fifteen, among them Father Jean Baptiste Polly. It was quality, not numbers that the Archbishop sought. He admonished the priests whom he placed in charge:

"Few, but good, Fathers. Yes, few but good; only twelve apostles were needed to convert the world and what will not twelve priests animated with a like zeal accomplish today? If they do not convert the world, they will contribute greatly to the re-establishment of good order in the diocese."

Father Polly was strict with himself and no less rigorous towards others. One night a scholastic had a dream in which he was summoned before the Judgment Throne. There was Our Lord with Father Polly on one side and on the other Father Augustin Payan, the one his theology teacher, the other his spiritual director. The hearing opened with a plea by his guardian angel:

"He has led a good life. See how he has loved the Blessed Virgin; how he has prayed; he has left all things to become a religious. Remember your promise: Every one that has left home, or brethern, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess everlasting life." (Matt. 19, 29)

Then Satan spoke up:

"According to my record he wasn't always a model child, and touching his claim to have left all things for your sake just look at these instances of a want of true intention. And as for the actual leaving, this is how he has kept the Rule. Finally here is a long list of faults of commission and omission. Remember that You told the apostles: No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9, 62)

The devil was very convincing and the young man turned tearfully to Father Polly who was nearest. Pointing to the place of punishment, Father Polly declared:

"He must pay, and pay every last mite."

Father Payan instantly implored Our Lord to show mercy to his young confrere, but before the judgment was delivered the scholastic woke up and lived another forty years.

Father Vallon was a teacher who kept strict order. He was often assigned the class that in the previous year had given teachers the most trouble. He was absolute master in the classroom, in the study hall, and when on recreation. Of him Bishop Charbonnel wrote:

"He was a holy priest, but he belonged to that class of saints feared by those under them."

"He bade them all around farewell,
Then kissed the hand that gave him birth;
Unweeping and unmurmuring,
Gave to his God his final breath."

These lines form part of a poetic tribute to Father John Cushing paid by Mr. P.J. Maddigan at a meeting of St. Michael's Literary Association on October 12, 1868. When he had finished reading his poetic tribute, Mr. Maddigan added:

"His unfeigned kindness to me during the time that I was under his instruction I can never forget. Ever gentle, ever mild, calm and dignified; he bore himself towards his pupils with the air of an angel rather than their superior, while his virtues afforded a model."

Father Tourvieielle was careful to avoid luxury in temporalities and believed that some austerity was good for church students. He defended his policy as being that of the Founders:

"We have worked, we have been content with little, we have earned bread by the sweat of our brow, and we have not eaten it alone; we have shared it with many others; we share it still. During the past fifty years we have given free tuition to more than 1000 pupils."

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